



FSU-WESTERN: In Russia, winter and spring grain harvesting was well underway in the north, and was virtually completed in southern areas. Furthermore, winter grain planting was underway in northern Russia, where the optimum time for planting crops is late August. A drying trend spread across northern Russia during the week, improving conditions for fieldwork, following several weeks of wet weather. Precipitation amounts ranged from 4 to 15 mm in Central Region and Central Black Soils Region, with mostly dry weather prevailing in Volga Vyatsk and the upper Volga Valley. Reports from Russia as of September 4 indicated that spring grains and pulses, excluding corn, were about 57 percent harvested. Farther south, widespread showers (10-50 mm or more) helped to ease prolonged dryness in Ukraine and parts of southern Russia (North Caucasus and lower Volga Valley). The precipitation in these areas helped to stabilize conditions for immature summer crops, and boosted topsoil moisture for upcoming winter wheat planting. Elsewhere, light, scattered showers (mostly less than 10 mm) in Belarus and the Baltics caused only brief delays in harvest activities. Reports from Belarus as of August 31 indicated that grain was about 88 percent harvested. Weekly temperatures averaged near to slightly below normal in Ukraine and southern Russia, and 1 to 3 degrees C above normal in northern Russia, Belarus, and the Baltics.